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REFERENCE

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Some
General
Histories
of Latin
America

by

WAYNE D. RASMUSSEN

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This edition of *Some General Histories of Latin America* contains 57 references as compared with 45 in the first edition. Included are 22 volumes not previously described, whereas 10 formerly listed are omitted. Some of the omissions were necessitated by volumes going out of print; the significance of other works has been altered by recent trends in world affairs. Most important in the decision to issue a second edition are the great numbers of books on Latin America that have been published within the last 2 years. These publications contribute to Inter-American friendship and testify to the growing importance of the Latin American Nations in the modern world.

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This series is intended as a vehicle for presenting the results of research in agricultural history conducted throughout the Department of Agriculture. Edited in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, with the aid of a Department advisory committee, the series will include monographs issued at irregular intervals as valuable materials and results of research become available.

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SOME GENERAL HISTORIES OF LATIN AMERICA

Wayne D. Rasmussen

Increasing interest in the Nations of Latin America is a natural development that has been hastened by the present World War. Today, in an effort to promote Pan American solidarity, there is a demand for a greater understanding of the problems of our southern neighbors and no problems can be fully understood without some reference to history.

That the general history of Latin America is readily available, in the English language, is sometimes a surprise to those who are just now becoming interested in the subject. Yet this is true, and within the last 25 years hundreds of books on the Nations to the South have appeared. Using English alone, one can acquire a considerable understanding of Latin American history, although other languages are essential for research in the field. It should be remembered, that historiography is well developed in Latin America and that the works of such scholars as Jose Toribio Medina of Chile, Francisco Garcia-Calderon of Peru, and Ricardo Levene of Argentina are world-renowned.

As an introduction to the study of Latin America, some consideration of its economic geography is valuable. The entire area is covered in *Geography of Latin America* by Fred A. Carlson. The southern continent is thoroughly discussed by Clarence F. Jones in *South America* and by R. H. Whitbeck, Frank E. Williams, and William F. Christians in *Economic Geography of South America*. The former is somewhat more complete, but the latter was more recently revised. The Caribbean area and Central America are considered in *North America* by J. Russell Smith and M. Ogden Phillips. One of the most recent economic geographies is *Latin America* by Preston E. James, who has included a historical survey and emphasized the human factor in the development of the region.

Several one-volume histories of Latin America have been published in the last few years, mainly for use as secondary-school and college textbooks. They range from the 96-page *The Good Neighbors* by Delia Goetz and Varian Fry, to the 941-page *The Development of Hispanic America* by A. Curtis Wilgus. *The Good Neighbors* is written in an abbreviated style which obviously must leave out much important material. *The Development of Hispanic America* is one of the most comprehensive one-volume texts available. Its length permits considerable attention to economic and social factors, and its extensive footnotes and bibliographies are most valuable to the research worker.

Philip Leonard Green's *Our Latin American Neighbors* and Roland Dennis Hussey's second revision of Hutton Webster's *History of Latin America* were published in 1941. Green's volume is a short, readable account which emphasizes the development of institutions without recourse to the detail found in most textbooks. Insufficient for a thorough-going approach, it serves as an introduction to our southern neighbors. Webster's book stresses political history and is useful as a secondary-school text. Social history is the keynote of the much-used *The People and Politics of Latin America* by Mary Wilhelmine Williams; and the international relations of the Latin American Republics are stressed in *Historical Evolution of Hispanic America* by J. Fred Rippy. Three other textbooks, *A History of Latin America* by David R. Moore, *Latin America* by F. A. Kirkpatrick, and *An Introduction to Hispanic American History* by Tom B. Jones, have been recently published. The first gives particular attention to modern history; the second compresses a great many facts into short space and, as a result, is not so readable as some others; and the third presents a brief but well-rounded account of the main trends in Latin American history. *An Outline History of Latin America* by A. Curtis Wilgus and Raul d'Eça, in the College Outline Series, is less detailed and easier to read than most textbooks.

A traditional way of presenting history is to divide a subject chronologically. In Latin American history, three much-used divisions are the pre-Columbian period, the colonial period, and the period since independence. In *Ancient Americans*, Emily C. Davis presents the story of America's earliest inhabitants in an entertaining manner. More detailed accounts, written from primary rather than secondary sources, are found in *Ancient Civilizations of the Andes* by Philip Ainsworth Means and *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America* by Herbert J. Spinden. *The Aztecs of Mexico* by George C. Vaillant is a recent volume well suited to the general reader. *A Bibliography on the Agriculture of the American Indians* by Everett E. Edwards and Wayne D. Rasmussen contains a number of references to the pre-Columbian civilizations of Central and South America.

Various aspects of the period from discovery to independence are treated in *Colonial Hispanic America*, a series of lectures, edited by A. Curtis Wilgus. Charles Edward Chapman's book, also entitled *Colonial Hispanic America*, is highly recommended, as is his *Republican Hispanic America*, a companion volume, which covers the modern period. These two books have been bound together as *Hispanic America: Colonial and Republican* and constitute a standard reference work.

At present, the literature in English, concerning Latin America, lacks scholarly, modern histories of the individual countries. The outstanding attempt to meet this need is the Inter-American Historical Series, consisting of translations of authoritative histories by Latin American scholars. The translations are being made by eminent specialists and have the great advantage of presenting Latin American viewpoints, although the greatest stress is usually placed on political history. Four volumes of the series have been published: *A History of Argentina* by Ricardo Levene, translated and edited by William Spence Robertson; *History of Colombia* by Jesus Maria Henao and Gerardo Arrubla, translated and edited by J. Fred Rippy; *A History of Brazil*

by João Pandia Calogeras, translated and edited by Percy Alvin Martin; and, *A History of Chile* by Luis Galdames, translated and edited by Isaac Joslin Cox. The history of Argentina has been covered by the English scholar, F. A. Kirkpatrick, in *A History of the Argentine Republic*. This book is quite detailed for the colonial period, but it does not adequately portray more recent events. One of the best historical studies of Cuba is *A History of the Cuban Republic* by Charles Edward Chapman, but the book is somewhat out-of-date as it was published in 1927. *Many Mexicos* by Lesley Byrd Simpson, although not definitive, is an interpretive history that traces the development of Mexican institutions.

In an effort to supply adequate information about specific countries, several studies combining history, geography, economics, and sociology have been published. These volumes do not replace the usual histories but are valuable supplements. They are particularly recommended to persons who are interested in agriculture for in most of them considerable space is given to land and agricultural problems. In *Mexico and Its Heritage* by Ernest Gruening, one of the best-known works of this kind, 56 pages are devoted to land problems, and there are many other references to agriculture. Guatemala has been well pictured in *Four Keys to Guatemala* by Vera Kelsey and Lilly de Jongh Osborne and *Guatemala, Past and Present* by Chester Lloyd Jones. In the first, land and agriculture receive comparatively little attention, but the second includes chapters on land and on different types of farming. Miss Kelsey has also written two thoughtful books on Brazil, *Seven Keys to Brazil* and *Brazil in Capitals*. Her viewpoint is primarily that of the sociologist. In 1941, two other countries received attention in *Chile; Land of Progress* by Earl Parker Hanson and *Colombia, Gateway to South America* by Kathleen Romoli. They are uncritical, but entertaining, and contain some material on agriculture. *Central America: Challenge and Opportunity* by Charles Morrow Wilson emphasizes present agricultural conditions.

Several specialized historical studies are available for the person who desires detailed information. There are many subjects which have not been thoroughly studied, however, and the value of the literature that has appeared varies greatly. The following are examples of the better works. As colonial land policies have directly influenced Latin American life down to the present, *The Encomienda in New Spain* by Lesley Byrd Simpson contributes to an understanding of present problems. There have also been many worthwhile studies of land policy in modern Mexico. One of the most thorough, though controversial in conclusions, is *The Ejido* by Elyer N. Simpson. Simon G. Hanson's *Utopia in Uruguay and Argentine Meat and the British Market* are valuable economic histories of recent developments. The latter is particularly useful to those interested in agricultural problems. Argentine land settlement and agriculture are discussed in *Peopling the Argentine Pampa* by Mark Jefferson. In the fertile field of international relations, *Hands Off: A History of the Monroe Doctrine* by Dexter Perkins is stimulating, up-to-date, and scholarly.

Biography is the favorite vehicle of many writers. *The Life of Miranda* by William Spence Robertson is a definitive historical work. *Dom Pedro the Magnanimous, Second Emperor of Brazil* by Mary Wilhelmine Williams

is a readable volume based on thorough research. *Sarmiento; A Chronicle of Inter-American Friendship* by Madeline W. Nichols is a short study of one of the great figures in Argentine history. Other works of comparable scholarship, as well as many romantic biographies are also available. The latter, although not always historically accurate, often give a good general picture that is difficult to secure from more scientific and prosaic volumes. *Woman on Horseback; the Biography of Francisco Lopez and Eliza Lynch* by William E. Barrett and *Porfirio Diaz, Dictator of Mexico* by Carleton Beals are cited as examples of such books. They are probably neither better nor worse than many others of a similar nature.

In the present-day effort to make Latin American problems known in the United States, it is inevitable that much of the literature should be of transitory rather than permanent interest, inasmuch as current issues are outlined in terms of current action. Economic and political problems are emphasized, sometimes with a historical background.

Good Neighbors by Hubert Herring and *Latin America* by William Lytle Schurz are outstanding. Both of these authors have spent considerable time in Latin America and have been studying its problems for many years. Herring's book emphasizes the present scene and is interesting and easily read; Schurz aimed at basic problems and gave considerable attention to agriculture and land problems. For many readers, one of these volumes would be an excellent starting point in learning of Latin America. *Latin America; Its Place in World Life* by Samuel Guy Inman points out that the different cultural values are important considerations in an understanding of our southern neighbors. *Pan America* is a recent work by Carleton Beals, who has written many volumes on Latin America. It is forceful and interesting, though his works are sometimes criticized by more conventional historians. Carl Crow, well known for his books on China, makes some interesting observations on trade and propaganda in *Meet the South Americans*, but the reader must remember that these generalizations are drawn mainly from the author's personal experiences.

In *The Republics of South America*, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (England) has successfully assembled considerable data on the southern continent, covering "its physical and racial ingredients, the history through which its free Republics have evolved, and the economic facts by which its life and prospects are conditioned." Both the nature and the extent of the material and the literary style make *The Republics of South America* a reference book rather than a volume for the general reader. *Inside Latin America* by John Gunther, one of the most popular current works, is valuable primarily for the author's personal impressions of various political leaders. However, Gunther's comparative unfamiliarity with Latin America makes it necessary that both factual statements and conclusions be checked before acceptance. Most writers point out the need for a larger population in many parts of Latin America. This need, combined with racial persecution, now rife in Axis-controlled areas, gives J. X. Cohen's *Jewish Life in South America* considerable interest. Cohen shows that many of the Jewish agricultural colonies have been rather successful.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a mass of valuable material in the form of magazine articles. Besides occasional treatments appearing in such diverse publications as *Harper's Magazine*, *Agricultural History*, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, *Land Policy Review*, and many others, there are at least three periodicals appearing regularly which are devoted entirely to Latin America. The *Hispanic American Historical Review* is published quarterly by Duke University Press, Durham, N. C.; The Pan American Union *Bulletin* is published monthly in English, Spanish, and Portuguese editions by the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C.; and *Agriculture in the Americas* is issued monthly by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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SOME GENERAL HISTORIES OF LATIN AMERICA

Wayne D. Rasmussen

The increasing interest in the nations of Latin America is a natural development that has been hastened by the present European war. Today, in an effort to promote Pan American solidarity, there is a demand for a greater understanding of the problems of our Southern neighbors. But no problems can be fully understood without some reference to history.

That the general history of Latin America is readily available in English is sometimes a surprise to those who are just now becoming interested in the subject. Yet such is the case, and in the last 25 years, almost a flood of literature has appeared. With a reading knowledge only of English, one can acquire a considerable understanding of Latin American history, although other languages are required for research in the field. As this article is mainly concerned with a useful general understanding, the works cited are general in scope and in English. It should be remembered, however, that historiography is well developed in Latin America and that the works of such scholars as José Toribio Medina of Chile, Francisco García-Calderón of Peru, and Ricardo Levene of Argentina are world-renowned.

As an introduction to the study of Latin American history, some consideration of economic geography is very valuable. The entire area is covered in *Geography of Latin America* by Fred A. Carlson. The Southern continent is thoroughly discussed by Clarence F. Jones in *South America* and by Ray Hughes Whitbeck, Frank E. Williams, and William F. Christians in *Economic Geography of South America*. The former is somewhat more complete while the latter is more recently revised.* The Caribbean area and Central America are included in *North America* by J. Russell Smith and M. Ogden Phillips, a new edition of which appeared in 1940.

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History of Latin America by Hutton Webster, revised by Roland Dennis Hussey, is often used as a secondary school text. Three of the newest general volumes are *A History of Latin America* by David R. Moore, *Latin America* by F. A. Kirkpatrick, and *An Introduction to Hispanic American History* by Tom B. Jones. Dr. Moore gives particular attention to recent history. Mr. Kirkpatrick condenses a great many facts into a short space and as a result, his volume is not as easy to read as some others. Dr. Jones gives a brief but well-rounded account. The newly revised *Historical Evolution of Hispanic America* by J. Fred Rippy is a valuable work stressing international relations. The Royal Institute of International Affairs [England] has very successfully assembled a considerable collection of data on the Southern continent covering "its physical and racial ingredients, the history through which its free Republics have evolved, and the economic facts by which its life and prospects are conditioned," in *The Republics of South America*. Both the mass of material and the literary style make it a reference book rather than a volume for the general reader. A less detailed and easier-to-read book is the new *Outline-History of Latin America* by A. Curtis Wilgus and Raul d'Eça, issued as one of the College Outline Series.

A traditional manner of presenting history is to divide a subject into time divisions. In Latin American history, three much used divisions are the period before 1492, the colonial period, and the period since independence. In *Ancient Americans*, Emily C. Davis presents the story of pre-Columbian America in an interesting way. More detailed accounts written from primary rather than secondary sources are found in *Ancient Civilizations of the Andes*, by Philip Ainsworth Means and *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America* by Herbert Spinden. For the following period, one of the most highly recommended volumes is *Colonial Hispanic America* by Charles Edward Chapman. Another book with the same title, *Colonial Hispanic America* consists of a series of lectures by several authorities in the field, edited by A. Curtis Wilgus. A similar series, also edited by Wilgus but covering more recent history, is called *Modern Hispanic America*. Chapman has written a companion volume to his colonial history entitled *Republican Hispanic America*. The two volumes have recently been bound together as *Hispanic America Colonial and Republican* and constitute a valuable reference.

At present there is a lack of scholarly, modern histories in English of the individual countries of Latin America. The outstanding attempt to meet this need is the Inter-American Historical Series. Briefly, this series consists of translations of outstanding histories of the Latin American nations by Latin American historians. The translations are being made by well qualified specialists and have the great advantage of presenting Latin American viewpoints. Four volumes of the series have been published. They are *A History of Argentina* by Ricardo Levene, translated and edited by William S. Robertson; *History of Colombia* by Jesus Maria Henao and Gerardo Arrubla, translated and edited by J. Fred Rippy, *A History of Brazil* by João Pandia Calogeras, translated and edited by Percy Alvin Martin, and *A History of Chile* by Luis Galdames, translated and edited by Isaac J. Cox. The history

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In an effort to supply adequate information about specific countries, several studies combining history, geography, economics, and sociology have been published. *Mexico and Its Heritage* by Ernest Gruening is one of the best known works of this type. Two of the most recent are *Seven Keys to Brazil* by Vera Kelsey, and *Guatemala Past and Present* by Chester Lloyd Jones. These volumes do not replace the usual histories but are valuable supplements.

There are many specialized historical studies available for the person who desires detailed information. But there are also many subjects which have not been thoroughly studied, while the value of the studies which have appeared varies greatly. *The Literary History of Spanish America* by Alfred Coester is a typical excellent work useful in the study of Latin American culture. Another volume typical of specialized studies is *The Ejido* by Eyler N. Simpson. There have been many works on the Mexican land problem, but this is one of the most scholarly. Simon G. Hanson has written two valuable economic histories of recent times in *Utopia in Uruguay* and *Argentine Meat and the British Market*. The last is particularly valuable for those interested in agricultural problems. Many other studies are available; many more should be written.

Biography is the favorite vehicle of many writers. *The Rise of the Spanish-American Republics as told in the Lives of their Liberators* by William Spence Robertson is a standard historical work. *Dom Pedro the Magnanimous, Second Emperor of Brazil* by Mary Wilhelmine Williams is a readable volume showing thorough and trained research. There have been others of a similar nature. There have also been many romantic biographies published. While these works are not always historically accurate, they often give a good general picture that is difficult to secure from more scientific and prosaic volumes. *Woman on Horseback, the Biography of Francisco López and Eliza Lynch* by William E. Barrett is cited as an example of such a book. It is probably neither better nor worse than many others of a similar nature.

In the effort to make Latin American problems known in the United States, it is inevitable that many of the volumes appearing should be of transitory rather than permanent interest. Current problems are outlined in terms of action today, and 10 years after publication the volumes will be of little interest or value. However, they do have a definite value for us today and the more scholarly of them are so filled with meaning that they cannot be neglected. *Whither Latin America* by Frank Tannenbaum and *Latin America; Its Place in World Life* by Samuel Guy Inman should be read carefully by everyone interested in our Southern neighbors. *The All-American Front* by

Duncan Aikman is a somewhat more ephemeral yet worth-while volume by an able journalist. *Pan America* is a recent work of Carleton Beals, who has written many volumes on Latin America. Mr. Beals writes with a fascinating style, though his work is sometimes criticized by more conventional historians. Brief discussions of present-day problems are found in *Latin America* by Stephen Duggan and *Look at Latin America* by Joan Raushenbush. The latter is particularly notable for its excellent charts.

Finally, it should be noted that there is a considerable mass of valuable material in the form of magazine articles. Besides occasional articles appearing in such diverse publications as *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Agricultural History*, *American Historical Review*, and many others, there are at least three periodicals appearing regularly which are devoted entirely to Latin America. *The Hispanic American Historical Review* is published quarterly by Duke University Press, Durham, N. C. *The Pan American Union Bulletin* is published monthly in English, Spanish, and Portuguese editions by the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C. *Pan American News* is a mimeographed current review published biweekly by the Foreign Policy Association, 1200 National Press Building, Washington, D. C.

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